(e) by when the gains from such efficient operations would be passed on to consumers in the form of lower rents and lower service charges ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) No, Sir.

The power of tariff fixation for various telecom services has been entrusted to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India by virtue of Sec 11(2) of the TRAI Act, 1997. Accordingly the Authority had notified Telecom Tariff Order 1999 on 15-03-99 which *inter-alia* provided for increase in rentals ranging from 20% to 140%. The Department of Telecom Services, as one of the service providers, has, however, not increased rentals in respect of rural subscribers and low calling urban subscribers (those making up to 200 calls p. m.). Even for other high calling subscribers TRAI's study shows that rental notified by them is below the cost.

(b) No, Sir.

The benefit of induction of new technologies as a result of which efficiency improves and costs come down goes to the customer in the form of tariff reduction as it is evident from reduction in long distance (STD) rates by around 20% from 1-5-99.

(c) and (d) The state-of-art technology and computerization is being constantly introduced in the telecom network to reduce cost of operation. Many innovative measures like massive expansion of optical fiber network and digital electronic exchanges etc. have been taken in this regard.

(e) As clarified in reply to part (a) and (b) above, gains from efficient operation are passed on to the consumers.

Poor performance of Karkardooma Telephone Exchange

3854. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether despite tall claims of prompt and efficient services by MTNL customer services and fault repair system under Karkardooma Telephone Exchange are in shambles and customers have to run from pillar to post for even petty services like activation/reactivation of STD/ISD facilities, call transfer system, CID systems etc;

(b) whether customers are asked to submit many applications for re-activation of their STD facilities and no action is taken on them for weeks together ;

(c) whether Government have received any complaints in this regard; and

(d) if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Sir, only one application is required from the customer with his/her signature attested by Central/State Government Gazetted Officer or from the Bank Manager of a scheduled bank.

However, in one case for re-activation of STD/ISD facility on telephone number 2162698 received on 11-4-2000, the attesting officer had written customer's name wrongly. The customer made necessary correction on 13-4-2000 and OB was issued promptly. STD/ISD facility was re-activated on 18-4-2000 on telephone No. 2162698 (14th, 15th and 16th April being holidays).

Computerisation of Post Offices in Himachal Pradesh

3855. SHRI ANIL SHARMA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the steps being taken by Government to computerise big post offices in Himachal Pradesh and also to provide internet/E-mail facilities there ;

(b) the number of such post offices with their locations which are presently computerised; and

(c) by when the remaining post offices will have such facilities ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) The computerisation of big post offices in Himachal Pradesh is being done as per targets and the availability of funds. At present, there is no proposal to provide Internet/E-mail facility in the post offices.

(b) So far, 58 post offices (list containing names is enclosed as statement) *(see* below) have been provided with PC based Multipurpose Counter Machines